

# Register of Australian Herbage Plant Cultivars

## A. Grasses

### 9. Forage Sorghum

#### *Sorghum* spp. hybrid. (forage sorghum hybrids) cv. Bantu

Reg. No. A-9d-4

Registered August 1969

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#### Origin

Bantu is the F1 cross between the male-sterile Redlan grain sorghum and Piper Sudan grass. It was produced at the Hermitage and Biloela Research Stations of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and submitted for inclusion in the Queensland Certified Sorghum Seed Scheme in 1969. Redlan was bred by J.B. Sieglinger of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station (2). Piper was bred at the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station from intercrosses of Tift Sudan grass and a range of lines low in hydrocyanic acid obtained from the Texas and Kansas Agricultural Experiment Stations (1). Seed of male-sterile Redlan and of Piper is maintained by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. Registered August 1969.

#### Morphological description

The hybrid grows taller than the parents and has a stem intermediate in diameter between them. In general appearance it is closer to the Sudan grass parent than to the grain parent. Tillering is intermediate between the parents. The stem is erect, soft when young, fairly sweet, and pithy. The inflorescences are open and spreading, irregular in outline. The glumes are black, large, and tightly enclose the grain; awns are either absent or represented by small tip awns. The grain is brown with a dark brown subcoat; it is dorsiventrally flattened, oval in shape, and slightly pointed; approx. 40,000 per kg.

Bantu is very similar to Zulu in appearance. The main difference is the dry or pithy stem and white midrib of the leaf blade in Bantu.

#### Agronomic characters

Bantu is agronomically similar to Zulu, Sudan SX-11A, Bonanza, and Sordan. It is capable of rapid early growth, of quickly producing a large bulk of green material, and of good recovery after mowing or grazing. It flowers a day or two earlier than Zulu when planted early in the season, but in mid-season or late plantings they flower together. Bantu is resistant to the prevalent races of head smut (*Sphacelotheca reiliana*) while Zulu is susceptible. This is the main reason for Bantu's inclusion in the Queensland Certified Seed Scheme.

In 11 trials which were grown at five sites during the years 1965-69, Bantu was equal of Zulu in total dry matter production. The only indication of difference in production at any stage of the season was a slight superiority of Bantu in early growth.

Digestibility trials indicated that Bantu was not inferior to Zulu. Bantu had a slightly lower hydrocyanic acid content than Zulu.

#### References

1. Hanson, A.A. (1965). Grass varieties in the United States. U.S.D.A. Agric. Handb. No. 170.
2. Karper, R.E. (1954). Registration of Sorghum varieties. VII. Redlan (Reg. No. 102). *Agron. J.* 46, 526-7.